

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINGST 04931 211450Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 COME-00 EUR-12 /035 W
-----011814 211648Z /72

R 211300Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1890

UNCLAS KINGSTON 4931

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, JM
SUBJECT: TOURISM REVIVES IN JAMAICA

1. MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, P.J. PATTERSON HAS TOLD PARLIAMENT THAT FOR THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, THE NUMBER OF STOP-OVER TOURISTS HAS INCREASED BY 42 PERCENT OVER THE SAME PERIOD FOR 1977. MR. PATTERSON WHOSE PORTFOLIO INCLUDES RESPONSIBILITY FOR TOURISM WAS GIVING A REVIEW OF HIS MINISTRY'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE CURRENT BUDGET DEBATE. HE SAID THAT FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY TO MAY 1978 THE NUMBER OF STOP-OVER VISITORS TOTALLED 183,000. THE MONTHLY BREAKDOWN WAS 41,000 IN JANUARY; 42,000 IN FEBRUARY, 48,000 FOR MARCH, 31,000 DURING APRIL AND 21,000 IN MAY.

2. MR. PATTERSON STATED THAT THE PATTERN OF INCREASE WAS A CONTINUING TREND STARTED IN AUGUST LAST YEAR AND WAS DUE TO A NEW AGGRESSIVE MARKETING POLICY BY THE JAMAICA TOURIST BOARD (INCLUDING HEAVY PROMOTION OF LESS EXPENSIVE PACKAGE DEALS IN THE U.S. AND CANADIAN MARKETS). THERE WAS ALSO MORE FAVORABLE ATTITUDE TO TOURISM BOTH LOCALLY AND OVERSEAS. THE FIGURES SHOW A WELCOME MOVE OUT OF THE TWO-YEAR SLUMP WHICH PLAGUED THE LOCAL INDUSTRY BETWEEN 1975 AND 1977.

3. FOLLOWING THE LAST PEAK YEAR OF 1974 WHEN A TOTAL
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OF 406,902 STOP-OVER TOURISTS ARRIVED, THE NUMBER OF VISITORS DECLINED. THIS STEMMED FROM THE WORLDWIDE RECESSION AND INTERNATIONAL PUBLICITY ABOUT JAMAICA'S POLITICAL IDEOLOGY DEBATE AND AN URSURGE IN THE CRIME RATE ESPECIALLY IN SOME PARTS OF KINGSTON.

4. DESPITE THE FAVOURABLE TREND IN VISITOR INCREASE,

FIVE HOTELS IN THE MONTEGO BAY AREA ARE CLOSING DOWN,
ALTHOUGH SOME OF THESE ARE JUST TEMPORARY CLOSURES DURING
THE SUMMER OFF-SEASON FOR REFURBISHING PURPOSES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOURISM
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978KINGST04931
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780259-0015
Format: TEL
From: KINGSTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780636/aaaabffv.tel
Line Count: 66
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0b8bb784-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2268673
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TOURISM REVIVES IN JAMAICA
TAGS: ETRD, JM
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0b8bb784-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014